

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method of removing a sheet from a stack of sheets,
comprising:

engaging an edge of the sheet along a portion thereof;

5 shaping the edge of the sheet to increase its stiffness; and

displacing the shaped edge relative to the stack to remove the
sheet.

2. A method according to claim 1, wherein engaging the sheet
along a portion thereof comprises engaging the sheet over a centrally
10 located portion thereof.

3. A method according to claim 1, wherein shaping the edge
comprises forming a generally right angled curl in the edge of the
sheet.

4. A method according to claim 1, wherein shaping the edge
15 comprises forming a partially tubular curl in the edge of the sheet.

5. A method according to claim 1, wherein removing the sheet
comprises displacing the shaped edge over the stack such that the
sheet at least partially folds back on itself.

6. A method according to claim 5, wherein removing the sheet comprises displacing the shaped edge away from the stack such that sheet slides off the stack.

7. A method according to claim 1, further comprising transferring
5 the sheet to a sheet compactor.

8. An apparatus for removing a sheet from a stack of sheets, the apparatus comprising a moveable picker bar extending over a portion of the width of the sheet, the picker bar having at least one engagement structure for engaging the sheet near an edge and shaping the edge to
10 increase its stiffness.

9. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the stack of sheets comprises a plurality of media sheets with slip-sheets interspersed between adjacent media sheets and the sheet that is removed is a slip-sheet.

15 10. An apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the media sheet is one of a lithographic or a flexographic plate.

11. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the picker bar is adapted to rotate about a longitudinal axis.

12. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the picker bar is
20 adapted to rotate to shape the edge.

13. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the engagement structure comprises a plurality of suction cups.

14. An apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the engagement structure comprises at least one vacuum groove extending
5 longitudinally along the picker bar.

15. An apparatus according to claim 8, comprising at least one air jet directed towards the edge to assist in shaping the edge.

16. An apparatus according to claim 8, comprising an actuator for placing the picker bar in contact with the sheet edge.

10 17. An apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the actuator is further adapted to roll the picker bar towards the edge to bring the engagement structure in contact with the edge.

18. An apparatus according to claim 8, comprising:

a first actuator for moving the picker bar into contact with the
15 sheet proximate to the edge;

a second actuator for rolling the picker bar towards the edge to bring the engagement structure in contact with the edge; and

wherein the rotation of the second actuator is synchronised with the motion of the first actuator so that in rolling the picker bar

towards the edge substantially no shearing force is imparted to the sheet.

19. An apparatus for removing a sheet from a stack comprising:

means for engaging an edge of the sheet;

5 means for shaping the edge of the sheet such that the edge is stiffened;

 means for displacing the shaped edge to remove the sheet from the stack.